

## Westminster High School

## East Middle School

Westminster, a very traditional City, had taken up the Art-Deco tendencies of the rest of the nation. Under the encouragement of the Federal Government through the BWA Program, this new high school was built in 1936 replacing 38 year old structure which, were told in 1936 newspaper article, "although improved and enlarged on several occasions has never been of adequate size or arrangement to care for the needs of the growing school population." The same newspaper article, somewhat through tear stained eyes notes "so much for the old high school, for already the students have said their farewells, they will not be so soon forgotten though, for many a romance has culminated within its halls and classrooms..." The image fo these culminating romances is mind-boggling.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

CARL # 541  
MAGI # 0005413902

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Westminster High School

AND/OR COMMON

East Middle School

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Longwell Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Carroll

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

\_\_\_ DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

\_\_\_ STRUCTURE

\_\_\_ SITE

\_\_\_ OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

☒ PUBLIC

\_\_\_ PRIVATE

\_\_\_ BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

\_\_\_ IN PROCESS

\_\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

☒ OCCUPIED

\_\_\_ UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_ YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_ NO

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_\_ AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_ COMMERCIAL

☒ EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_ GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_ INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_ MILITARY

\_\_\_ MUSEUM

\_\_\_ PARK

\_\_\_ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_ RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_ SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_ TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_ OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Carroll County Bd. of Education

Telephone #: 848-8280

STREET & NUMBER

55 N. Court Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21157

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carroll County Office Building

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

Center Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

CNR-541

**7 DESCRIPTION**

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The old Westminster High School fronts the east side of Longwell Avenue, Westminster, on the northernmost section of that street.

The building is, perhaps, Westminsters most conserted effort into Art-Deco, a style which, by 1936, when the High School was to be built had enjoyed phenomenal success throughout the country. The building seems to be governed by the number 3. There are three wings which create a half H-shape; the principal facade or wing has three modernistic brick and limestone dividers creating, on the buildings three floors, two sections each having three sub-section being three bays wide. Originally the windows seem to have been double-hung sash windows which have since been replaced by modern permanent smoked glass. Furthermore each of the brick and limestone dividers has, at the top, a set of three steps. Moderne carved limestone decorations enliven the centers of the end dividers, and provide finials for the three story brick pilasters which surround both carved designs.

A November 27, 1936 newspaper article provides contemporary details about the buildings original appearance. We are told that;

The building is 188' x 152' and of a modern architectural design built of brick, steel and concrete with Indiana limestone trim. As for its safety, it is absolutely fireproof throughout. Interior walls and corridors are tiled to insure this safety. The floors of the first and second classrooms are blocked linoleum, while the floors of the basement are composition.

Also, a feature of the building is the 1700 built-in all metal fireproof lockers. These are to be found on all corridors and to all classrooms....

The basement will contain the cafeteria, the kitchens, pantrys, domestic science, sewing, metal and wood shops, forge room, music and typing rooms, and teachers conference room.

The first floor or main main floor contains 12 classrooms, modern lavatories, restrooms, guest room and the principal offices. The principal's suite, contains a waiting room a secretary's office, a private office and stock rooms, all with communicating doors and entrance to main corridors....

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

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SPECIFIC DATES	1936	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	B. E. Starr
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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The architectural interest of the old High School has already been discussed: Westminster, a very traditional City, had taken up the Art-Deco tendencies of the rest of the nation. Under the encouragement of the Federal Government through the PWA Program, this new high school was built in 1936 replacing 38 year old structure which, were told in 1936 newspaper article, "although improved and enlarged on several occasions has never been of adequate size or arrangement to care for the needs of the growing school population." The same newspaper article, somewhat through tear stained eyes notes "so much for the old high school, for already the students have said their farewells, they will not be so soon forgotten though, for many a romance has culminated within its halls and classrooms..." The image of these culminating romances is mind-boggling.

A newer high school was built south of town in 1971, and the old building was used as a "Middle" school.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Being a plot of land bounded by Longwell Avenue to the west by a Back Alley to the south and by West Street to the north, lying just north of the corporate limits of Westminster.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Christopher Weeks, Consultant

December, 1977

ORGANIZATION

Westminster Historical Sites Survey

DATE

STREET &amp; NUMBER

c/o City Hall - Public Works Department

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Westminster

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

#782

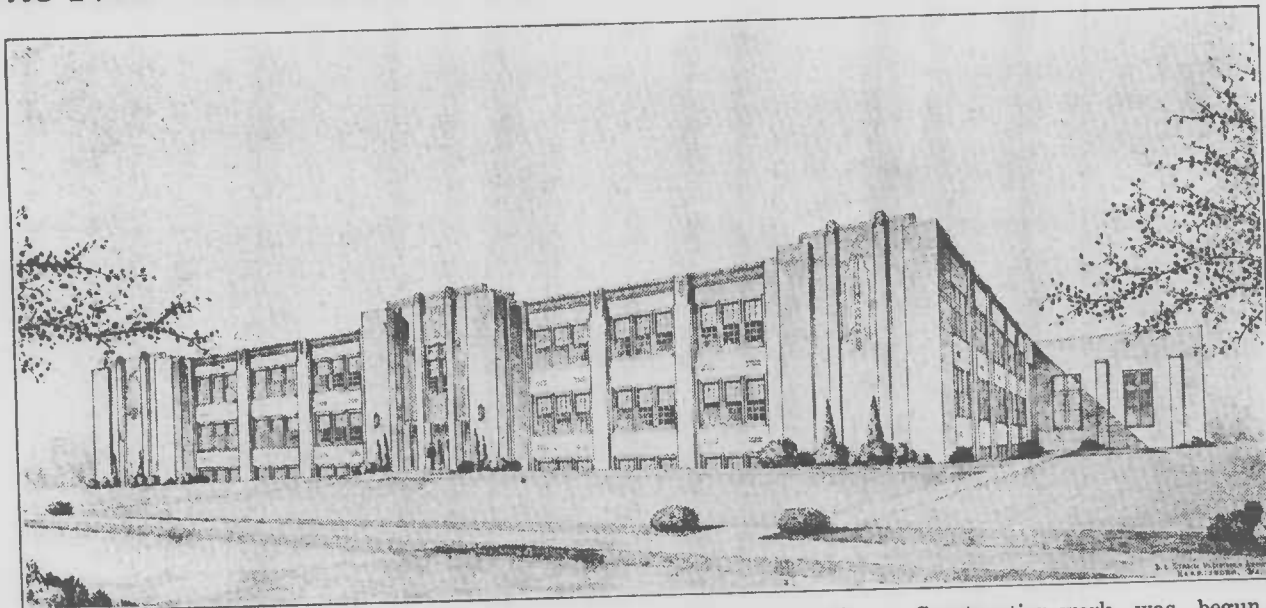
Also on the second floor is to be found three modern laboratories, five classrooms, a large attractive library, lavatories, and restrooms....

Of special interest and pride is the beautiful auditorium, 65' x 107' which is entered from the buildings' corridor or entrance to the building. It has a seating capacity of approximately 1000 with stationary opera chairs....

Battleship linoleum is laid on the floor to permit quietness and comfort while the walls are furnished in pastels and ivory. Window drapes are of ecru. A special feature is a modern indirect lighting generally used in theaters and large auditoriums. The stage is a fair size and drops of ecru and mulberry are completely equipped with theatrical lighting effects.

We are also told, towards the end of the article, that the total cost of the building is approximately "209,000 exclusive the furnishings....All available furnishings have been moved from the old building to the new and the approximate cost of new furnishings is between 6,000 and 7,000 dollars." Not surprisingly, considering the boldness of the design, we are also told that "the work has been done under a PWA grant, which is 45% portion of the total cost."

# The New Westminster High School To Be Occupied Monday



Westminster's new high school is ready for occupancy, and the trek of students will begin on Monday morning. Inspections are over, pupils have already learned their room locations, and conducted tours are at an end. In fact the business of learning under more favorable conditions will begin on Monday when E. C. Seitz, Principal, presses the call bell for the opening of classes.

After years of agitation, Westminster has a school of adequate proportions, one that is modern in every detail, to take care of the present student body and the expected increase for many years to come. It is a handsome structure, one in which the citizens and school patrons are justly proud.

The school building on Center St. which was built in 1898, although improved and enlarged on several occasions, has never been of adequate size or arrangement to care for the needs of the growing school population. For the past twenty-years it has been crowded, certain necessary facilities were lacking, until in late years it was necessary to erect several portables and to convert the assembly hall into class and study rooms. This necessitated an outside assembly place, and it was required to parade the children to the Opera House for this purpose. A playground and athletic field which is so essential to a school was also lacking, and athletics were thereby handicapped.

So much for the old high school, for already the students have said their farewells. It will not be so soon forgotten though, for many a romance has culminated within its halls and classrooms, and many school day pleasantries will be remembered through the years to come. The old building had a service to render, and it rendered it well under capable leadership.

The present location, which is on a ten-acre tract, purchased from the B. F. Shriver Co., and the Crowl estate, faces on Longwell Ave., extended. The building is 188x152 feet and of a modern architectural design, built of brick, steel and concrete with Indiana limestone trim. As for its safety, it is absolutely fireproof throughout. Interior walls and corridors are tiled to insure this safety. Floors of the first and second floor class rooms are of blocked linoleum, while the floors of the basement are composition.

A feature of the building is the 700 built in all metal fireproof lockers. These are to be found in all corridors and convenient to each class room. Each student will have its own locker for the period of the school year, eliminating the old style cloak-room. Students will be given a key on Monday which will be returned at the end of the year.

The basement will contain the cafe-

teria, kitchens, pantries, domestic science, sewing, metal and wood shops, forge room, music and typing rooms, and teachers conference room.

The first floor or main floor contains twelve class rooms, modern lavatories, rest rooms, guest room and the Principal's offices. The principal's suite contains a waiting room, secretary's office, private office and stock rooms, all with communicating doors and entrance to main corridors.

Mr. Seitz will have a complete system of communication to all class rooms and departments.

On the second floor is to be found three modern laboratories, five class rooms, a large and attractive library, lavatories and rest rooms.

Each floor has a complete fire alarm system, incinerator shutters, clocks and all the necessities for safety. Every room is ventilated. In the basement under the auditorium is ample space for additional rooms if needed. The heating system is steam with stoker control and the lighting system consists of a lighting and power circuit. Sewerage has been installed and is in complete connection with the city system.

Of special interest and pride is the beautiful auditorium, 65x107 feet which is entered from the main corridor or entrance to the building. It has a seating capacity of approximately one thousand with stationary opera chairs. The floor is sloped toward the stage to give clear vision from every part of the room. A large balcony accommodates about 150. Battleship linoleum is laid on the floor to permit quietness and comfort, while the walls are finished in pastels and ivory. Window drapes are of ecru. A special feature is the modern indirect lighting generally used in theatres and large auditoriums. The stage is of fair size with drops of ecru and mulberry and completely equipped with theatrical lighting effects.

Grading of the land was under the PWA and the building was planned by B. E. Starr of Harrisburg, Pa., registered architect. The contract for the general building was awarded to Allen Feeser, Taneytown; heating and plumbing to George Harner, Taneytown; electrical work, to Blumenthal-Kahn Electrical Company, of Baltimore. Top soil and fine grading of the ground was included in the general contract, but the scheme of planting the grounds was designed and executed by the Westminster Nursery. The total cost of the building is approximately \$209,000.00, exclusive of furnishings. All available furnishings have been moved from the old building to the new and the approximate cost of new furnishings is between \$6,000 and \$7,000. The work has been done under a PWA grant, which is 45 per cent proportion of the total cost.

Construction work was begun in January of this year with the following engineers assigned to the job: PWA resident engineers, Stewart Miller, Hagerstown; William I. Eney, Baltimore, and Lawrence B. Ritter; engineers of Carroll County Board of Education, John H. Elgen and Walter Barnes.

In November 1935, the school board granted ten feet of land along the alley running parallel with Willis street to the city. This will be paved as soon as convenient. Longwell avenue has been extended and paved and the county has completed its portion of roadway, which gives a full width street in front of the building.

As proposed, the athletic field, when completed will be of ample size for all sports, including track, football, baseball and tennis. It is the plan of the school board to add at a later date, a wing to the present structure to house the gymnasium.

All grades from the Seventh up will occupy the new structure, which includes about 625 students.

The faculty in the new building will be as follows: E. C. Seitz, principal and economics; Samuel Jenness, assistant principal, business and algebra; Miss Katherine Fiscel, assistant principal, English; Lyman Earhart, mathematics and athletics; Frank Clark, general science and chemistry; Miss Helen Eckard, English and library; Miss Frances Miller, history; Mrs. Carey K. Sentz, Latin and French; William G. Eaton, English; Curvin Seitz, mathematics and physics; Miss Elizabeth Bemiller, biology and General science; Rose Conaway, history and library; Mrs. Willard Hawkins, music; Miss Ethel Ensor, sewing, home economics; Miss Marie Hull, home economics; Samuel Caltrider, shop; Claude M. LeFevre, shop; Huston Curd, commercial; Emma Brown, business; Mrs. Maitland Barnes, commercial; Miss Cornelia Kroh, librarian and business training. Seventh Grade, Miss Alma McCaffrey, science, geography, music appreciation, penmanship and spelling; Miss Rachel Buckingham, history, arithmetic, civics and health; Miss Eva Rinker, English, art and reading. There will be some revision in the seventh grade schedule.

Monday will also mean moving day for the children of Graceland school on Green street. This group will occupy the first floor of the Elementary building on Center street, while the 5th and 6th grades will occupy the second floor. This means that Graceland and all portables will be vacant, with all classes housed under one roof.

The moving of all equipment was completed during the week with schools closed from Monday afternoon.

Nov. 27-1936

## HISTORY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WESTMINSTER

Lisa Kronman

The story of public schools in Westminster is one of growth and modernization. In 1965, a study compared Carroll County's current school funds with those of 1865. It was found that the cost per pupil in 1865 was \$5.24, and the cost per pupil in 1965 was \$367.81. This cost reflects continuing improvements in the educational programs, policies, and buildings in Westminster.

Public schooling was begun early here. In fact, the first act providing for a free school was passed in 1694. The funds to support this school were raised by taxing imported Irish Catholic servants, black slaves, and tobacco. For thirty years fur traders also contributed to the school fund. Because fur trading was a large and profitable business, traders were forced to pay duties on their merchandise. However, the idea of the public school that we know today did not evolve until 1864.

There were many private schools in and about Westminster. There was the Collegiate and Academic Institute, founded in 1860, The Thorndale Seminary for Young Ladies, and Buell's Seminary for Women, founded in 1859. In 1835, there was an article in a local newspaper advertising a night school for adult education.

In 1864, Libertus Van Bokkelen, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, submitted to the General Assemble the following criteria for public schools:

- 1) Education ought to be universal.

- 2) Education ought to be free.
- 3) The property of the whole state is responsible for the education of every child.

Taking these criteria into consideration, Carroll County fully launched its Public School program. The school year was divided into two terms, forty-nine and forty-six days each. The school day started at 8:30 am, with an hour for lunch and a fifteen minute recess, and ended at 4:00 pm. The students were not given textbooks, but had to rent them from the school.

The school buildings were not at all like the modern highschoools of Westminster today. In 1885, there were rural one-room schoolhouses in each school district in Carroll County. A visitor to the area described one of these buildings:

"One room with three windows on each side. There was no vestibule and the door opened directly into the room. On each side of the door was a row of nails for the wraps, and in the corner a bench made from a slab supported by wooden pegs. This bench was a receptable (sic) for a tin water bucket, a dipper, and a wash basin. The building was heated by a tin plate stove...A row of desks were placed on either side of the room... the boys occupying the row on the left and the girls those on the right...On the wall was a small blackboard... a bookcase completed the furnishings..."

There were also a few schools for black students in the county. There were usually conducted in private homes and there is little information on them.

Soon this system of one-room schoolhouses was no longer sufficient for the growing numbers of school-age children, and in 1898, Westminster built the first public high school in Carroll County. This school, (now the unoccupied East End Elementary School on Center Street)

had three or four classrooms, cloak rooms instead of nails next to the door, and an outside playground. It did not, however, have sanitation facilities; outside toilets were not installed until 1932.

The town must have been very happy with its new highschool because the attendance rate was 93.8% of school age children. Of course, attendance was strictly enforced in those days. Every district had a truant officer, who did his best to make sure that the taxpayers weren't wasting their money. As an added incentive, schools were given awards of new books and funds for having the highest monthly attendance rates.

Students in the 1800's were taught many of the same subjects that students are taught today. They learned manual, domestic, and industrial arts, music, history, and geography. Greek and Latin were both standard subjects well into the twentieth century.

In 1922, a series of Standard Tests were given to all grades in Carroll County, and it was found that most of the students were too old for the class to which they were assigned. Measures were taken to improve the quality of public education. A few new programs were instituted, but the biggest change was the beginnings of physical education. More stress was put on the physical health and ability of children in hopes that it would lead to improvement in their academic work. Recess periods were lengthened, intramural games begun, and a Playground Athletic League was formed.

Soon the High School on Center Street was no longer big enough and funds were appropriated for the building of a

new school on Longwell Avenue, (Now the Westminster Middle School). This school, which opened in 1937, had all the newest innovations-indirect lighting, metal lockers instead of cloak rooms, an incinerator, and a fire alarm system. The school has since undergone a few additions and alterations, including a new gymnasium, constructed in 1940, and new shop facilities. Even this school was outgrown and the newest Westminster High was built out on Route 32.

An understanding of Westminster's past will contribute to better appreciation of today's educational system. The progression from the small brick building on Center Street to the sprawling high school complex on Route 32 parallels Westminster's growth as a community.

39%



CAPA 541

Westlake High School

5-21

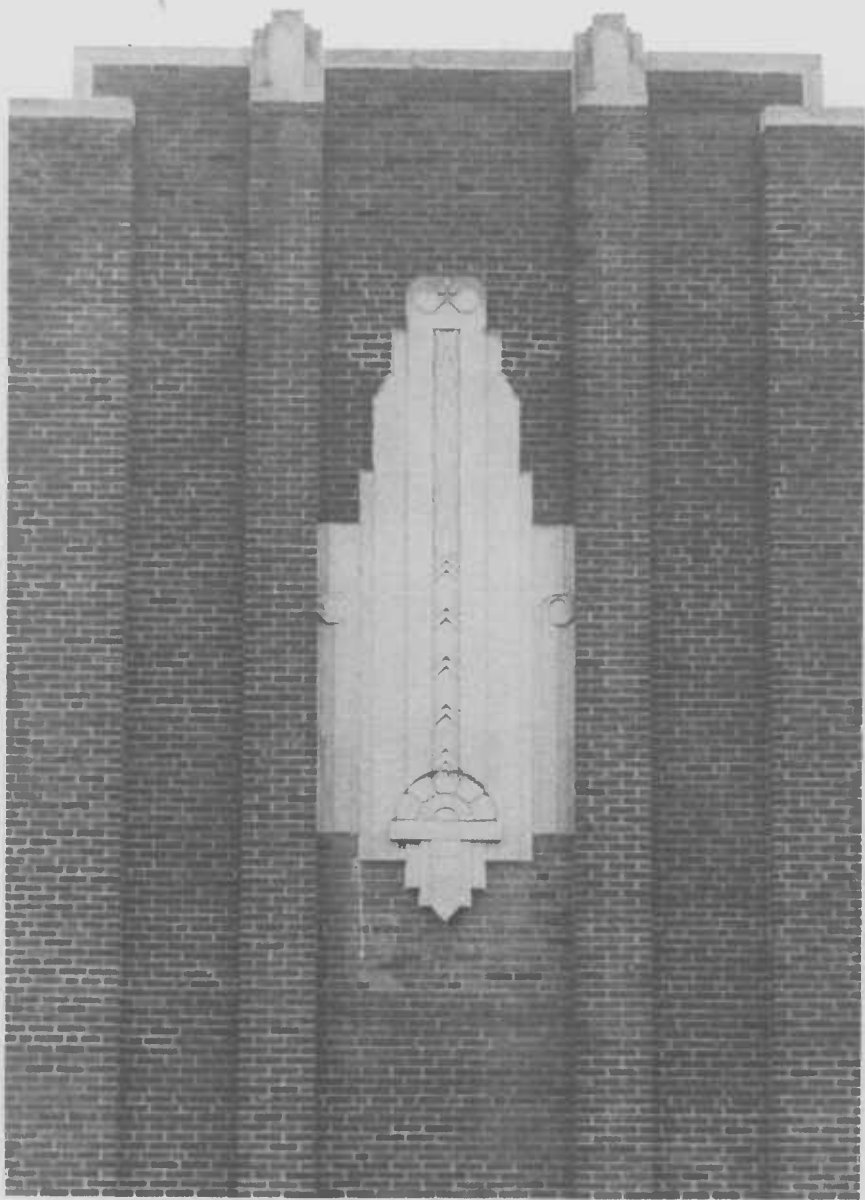
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Old Westmonte High School  
(detail)